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Letter from Anne Whitney, Zell's Platte, Switzerland, 1867 August 30

Anne Whitney

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Tell's Plate Aug 30/67-

(Copy)

(15-

We are very happy in receiving letters
this morning through our prompt & faithful Sig-
marcel to whom I was informed to go in Lausanne
& I am in doubt whether I told you in the last
dispatched the other day to continue to send
to him. When however you receive this I think
it may be too late to send a reply to Sister. I
shall be sorry if any news from Rome sh'd prevent
our leaving here the 1st Oct. We did think to
start by the 23^d Sept to go back but the accounts
of cholera in Italy suggest wariness - At any
rate sh'd anything come to Lausanne after
our departure it can easily be sent after.
& as you have access to Roman news in about
the same degree that we have, you can act
upon the probabilities in the case about directing.
You are all well - That is the first thing I see
on opening a letter - & yet well is well with a
difference. The little ailings & troublesomes
don't find their way into letters perhaps - at
least in a way to be perceptible - & I fancy that
a lingering rheumatism or what you deem
an abortive effort to help brother's children or
something else in the wind sometimes makes
it not so easy to write cheery letters over the
long brine as in reading them it wld seem.
I will begin by answering yr questions concerning
health lest it sh'd be forgotten in the general
high tide of appetite & flesh. Adagio Catarrhes
trouble I hear nothing of & sh'd not in fact
guess the existence of - She certainly eats mar-
velously well of state bread & butter & pound
cake with plums in it when she can get it -

not to speak of fritters fried in fat & covered
with sugar. I am equally potent on this
ground & for my general condition must
refer you to what achievements I have modestly
boasted at. I am not however doing as at the
White House sometime & drawing on an excess
of nervous energy. I feel well & take mountain
life with a dash of moderation. My ear has abated
its ambitious pretensions & is content to listen &
stop singing. The throat also is on its good behavior
& all the animal economy thro order & regularity is
apparently on the road to peace - no - is at peace
I mean - If I shd have a little headache 3 weeks
from now it wd be no more than I have had in
the healthiest periods as you know - & I think on
the whole except while I was in Rome when I had
very little headache not one bad one I have
been about the same in that respect as at home. I
will no longer weary you with hopes of happy effect
but boldly say that in Italy I was better than at home.
Here I am as well & in some respects better.

X X X X + + + + + + + + + +
& here endeth the 1000 & 1st lesson - You must
know that this Am. A. M. the Church of Eng. held
divine service in our parlor - they having no parlor
over at the large house asked if we wd permit
them to come here - & this lovely parlor with its
& lake round its two sides - three sides is all ours.
That is we have the whole floor - 3 little bed rooms
& the balconies & salon - practically I may say the
whole house is ours - Every day the wonder grows
& we have decided finally to remain

2) here, my friends, sure that we shall find not only
 a good climate here. Board is 5 fr. including candles
 & service - wh. is cheaper than we are likely to find
 elsewhere. There is no village - nothing but the 2 houses
 the hotel & ours. We learn more some nice remarks
 from the unimpaired condition of the horses but they
 are generally getting as to night - & they are kind
 & obliging. The buildings were put up only little more
 than a year since by an enterprising present family
 (of noble descent, nobility ^{here} as cheap as Calcutta
 but well -) of 13 children. They are a little green
 but things on the whole are pretty good & the
 deer & do well as an earnest of success in that
 way. The horses are finely situated a long & so
 animals climb above the lake & almost opposite
 sit out with scarps of snow grass from
 their sturdy backs in the lake. The deer gets the
 birds there but ~~not~~ ^{very} ~~much~~ ^{few} being shepherds
 somewhat in this way with deep ravines & gorges
 between the high road ~~over~~ ^{on} & there giving a thousand
 beautiful effects & presenting that bounding sense
 wh. you have when a continuous chain interposes
 its impenetrable barrier between you & the horizon.
 The cliffs on this side are great walls. Their
 rugged & awful headlands lead the eye far up
 & up & tho they are ~~directly~~ ^{directly} behind us the line
 of the road that passes along below them is so
 irregular & with such bold curves that we have
 wonderful changes of view. At present - some
 of these cliffs are as marvellous as a Sephiro City
 and be or any of those things that used to haunt
 the fancy of John of the Revelations. At a turn
 of the road last week a mountain of rock rose
 like tower with a dome & banded with turquoise
 & vivid green, flecked upon the top like an illuminated
 rose, out of which the grey light seemed to pour in
 even direction. The over light wh. casts upon the
 high cliffs at the same time is said to be
 peculiar to them - it is not known why the same
 conditions of atmosphere shd. not sometimes ~~other~~
 in Anconia & think they must. There never seen

However - ^{say 50} There is a pleasant party of English
 people at the hotel who spend all their time
 sketching. They came over yesterday & look at
 the sketches & the photographs we have collected
 since leaving Rome & seemed very much pleased.
 With regard to the prices of photo's there is
 home it wd. be difficult to decide, as we do not
 know what choice you have. A. thinks that
 for good ones photo's at home we pay 25 cl. & for
 etching p. views, 50 a piece & 10 cl. Have says
 that we can get here 2 for 14 fr. & 4 for 20 fr.
 microscopic pictures - he paid in Waterloo 12 fr.
 for 13. We get fine large sized photographs
 for 8 fr. a piece - I do not believe you can
 get such a choice of pictures at home - &
 those I have bought were got under the
 impression that when we shd. go where they
 could not be obtained we shd. regret not
 having bought them. One finds in different
 places the pictures belonging to the right
 region. We have Florence pictures & Milan
 pictures - ^{well at the place} & c. & c. & Nelson finds at one place
 the photographs of another. I hope you
 will enjoy those I have already obtained.
 the people who have seen them say we have
 a fine collection. When the 3 ^{sets} are together
 they make a show. I shall be glad to fill
 out of commission my dear Sarah & think I
 have already spent about 50 fr. since
 leaving Rome. I did not buy many in Florence
 & as yet none to speak of in Rome. Among the
 Eng. party is an English picture his wife who
 live at Coblenz. I was sitting at dinner
 yesterday, our sweet corn wh. is not known
 in these brighter lands. When Mr. Meeks (the
 actor) said they never test ^{corn come in their season} summer & picked
 it just as it was beginning to turn yellow
 & boiled it 2 hours, when upon trying it they
 found it to be as hard as ever on the inside &
 so boiled it 2 hours more. Finally they concluded

that it might do for Americans but didn't
quit them. I told them that if they had kept
on boiling for 4 hours more they might possibly
have been able to eat the food. But that you
did not venture upon that. They say of German
cream & cheese that you can't spoil it even
all the time kept to the stall as in Germany
such milk as you get from those who
feed in the open air - as in Eng. Mr. Wake
says the Germans are miserably behind the
age in all matters of improvement. I thought
of Mr. Flint who has adopted this plan of
keeping cattle. It seems to me highly probable
that a method of keeping them wd. suit
best for the general health of the animals
~~cannot~~ ^{might} be good for the milk. All people
who have lived in Germany whom I have
seen, give but one report of the Germans.
I am utterly surprised & overturned in all
my previous conclusions by the contempt
& disgust (not too strong words) expressed
by such men as Mr. Lecky, Richards & now
Mr. Esq. Priest who has been Chaplain of
Robert's for many years I believe. Mr. P.
says he wd. rather see a child of his dead
than bred at a German school. That the
morality - taught there & at the universities
is of the basest kind. Lying, mean advantage
& eternal resentment of injuries are the
chief staples of instruction. I told him
I had thought that among us they were a
well educated & were generally on the
right side in politics. He says it is not so
in Penn. & that the most brutal murders
committed in Amer. are by Germans. He
thinks the position of women among the lower
orders is sufficient index of their social state.

She is treated like a beast of burden while
the men smoke & take his ease. I find
this I must put on our opinion of
your manner among the travelling
classes. I think we have never seen
an instance of anything that we do not
quietly consider ^{much more} ~~in former~~ so than
we are accustomed to see among our own
people. Unless I must visit them I dis-
like habit of smoking everywhere. Men
& women on this & considerable & each
other & also very careful to notice their
girls.

Sept. 7th. Last Sat. A.M. I took boat
to Lacorn when the Phoenias are - but
they were not at home. were in fact gone
in the opposite direction & found no appeal
Bonnard, the place we had previously
decided to go to, but wh. on introduction we
did not like. They wrote wanting us to join
them in an excursion to Andromette last
Tuesday, wh. & reach they take boat to
Bluelin & go past our doors. I feel
wholly well that M. thinks I sh. have
gone in order to see them, but a little heavy
the night bef. has slight indisposition on -
& it was as well for we go home that way.
(St. Gotthard). A note fr. Mary last night
urgently invited us to come to Lacorn & stay.
& we walked to Bluelin to take boat, so that
we were some doubt whether the boat would stop here
at the hour. but we were too late. owing to the
differ of time & were rowed back again. I have
written for them to come here to pass the night.
but whether we shall overcome the streak
of ill-luck wh. prevails over our attempts
at meeting here seems doubtful.
I bought a piece of clay as large as a brick all

the way from Milan meaning so soon as
we stayed in a place for a little time to have
a sketching spell - This is my first chance.
The quiet, the abundant room, every thing is
favorable - except the wretched painting of
out doors. A merely feather on the balcony -
the ~~house~~ in of this region seems to be quite
favorable to clay. Two of our Eng. friends
Mr. & Mrs. Wakes took their departure
this A.M. Mrs. W. Welles & F. Challen while
her husband & friend bowed their baggage up
from F. they were going to walk on Belmont
Mrs. & Mrs. Kilpatrick (Mrs. W's sister &
brother-in-law). Have walked all over Italy
in different visits here.

Here it is Sept. My birth-day is past &
I hear not of Edward's summer pleasure
trip - & of yours my dear only that it
is given up. It gives me pain. Might
I find a way - but how? I feel a kind of
pain in these surroundings. Thinking that
I have all this vanity of beauty so & so closely.
Let it give way to it - sometimes quite dreadfully
only that it has given up. not here me
but it is pleasant in Belmont. So far
it is good. Last night I dreamed that we
were all living in E. C. again it was a nightmare
& gave me a fit of sobbing. I enjoy the idea
of the beauty of Arthur's harbor & Carrie's
& Louise's going there & going it.

Sept. 8. This is Sunday & day in which I am wont
to think more of home than on other days. I believe
if that be possible - that I think I am not so
much in the way of writing this day. Another
Englishman came last week & we had the service here
again this A.M. The Lord's prayer - the Lord's prayer
& the singing of the hymn were the only parts of the
service with which I can feel interest. They say that

hymn - Upon our daily course our mind, Be let
to follow all we find etc. It gave me the merry
hike again on the Walstow slope (where you
are now - Mr. Tolate - belongs to Mr. Weiss) with
the addition of Grass Mts. & the most beautiful
of Swiss lakes. Last Sat. Some exp. ladies came
here & spent that evg with us - & one of them
Miss Walker, recited some very pleasing poetry
in the absence of our poets it - as good
to come & serve a memory for those things. We
hoped the Shannons wd. come to day - but they have
not. We have promised to go to Lucerne tomorrow.
Another admirer came last evg. full of intimacy
matter. The Roman disturbances announced in
this have come to a bill since. Whether happens
there there is not likely to be any danger to the
American residents. Concerning the Cholera, we
shall not return to Rome until we have first
written to Mr. Cocchi or Dr. Gould, & ascertained
the real state of affairs. It was a mercy that
we came to Italy this summer. Do I elude you
ask dear Arch. Excellent well - yes, much better
than at home - I can not so reward as I wish. You
spoke in one letter of Mr. Portin's health as very
fable - & nothing since. Tell me about them when
you write & give love to them all. There is talk
of an excursion to the top of the Rigi this week.
It is a horseback affair for those who
cant walk. I shd. not venture the walk.
One goes up in the Pull. & returns the next
day. A Mt. Parovene of 300 miles altitude
is seen from the top. I fell on receiving Mr.
last letter & a sense of relief that you may
over heart & dear father & mother had
so nicely got thro the heat & fatigues of summer
in tolerable health. I long to hear from you
again - I missed Carrie in the last letter - The
political situation is highly interesting. Dear
love to you all - I wonder rather to sit give me
a line. Perhaps if I asked him something about
old person Eliot's mad cow or the fence in front of the
Deceis house in Watutau's historical days - he would -